

Council Connection



Upcoming meetings:

- Heritage Preservation Board, 7 p.m. Dec. 13
- Park Board, 7 p.m. Dec. 13
- Planning Commission, 7 p.m. Dec. 14
- Art Center Board, 4:30 p.m. Dec. 15
- Transportation Commission, 6 p.m. Dec. 15

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We'd like to hear from you ...
If you have any comments, call Communications & Marketing Director Jennifer Bennerotte at 952-833-9520. The text of this publication will be available online at www.CityofEdina.com.



A summary of the Dec. 6 Edina City Council meeting

Council considers providing financial assistance to mall owner

Council members showed some support for providing financial assistance to the owners of Southdale Center for renovation of the shopping center.

Simon Properties has requested a \$5.378 million grant from the City as an incentive that would cause them to do a \$15 million renovation at Southdale Center. Simon officials have said the project will not be possible without help from the City.

Most Council members indicated their support of providing Simon with \$4-5 million loan, possibly at no interest, that would partially be paid back from a TIF district created to exploit the new valuation created by the project. Additional terms the City is considering include:

- A permanent easement for a water treatment facility at no cost that would allow the City to complete construction of the facility by 2013.
- Land for a transit station.
- Option to lease third-floor space at the mall for a pre-determined lease rate.
- Landscaping and site plan improvements that provide improved pedestrian connections in the greater Southdale area.

The Council directed City Manager Scott Neal to further negotiate a deal with Simon Properties.

Council moves toward approving budget

No one testified at a public hearing on the proposed 2012 City budget.

In September, the City Council set the maximum tax levy for 2012. The preliminary General Fund expenditure budget prepared by City Manager Scott Neal is \$30,604,436. The preliminary expenditure budget for the General Fund, the equipment replacement program within the Construction Fund, and all debt levies is \$36,440,420.

Neal prepared the draft budget with several goals in mind, including stabilizing City operations and employee headcount, keeping employee compensation at market levels and maximizing use of available unreserved fund balances.

The City's current unreserved fund balance is nearly \$2.5 million. Neal has proposed transferring \$700,000 to the Construction Fund, spending \$300,000 on technology and human resources projects, and providing one-time property tax savings of \$378,000 by paying debt service. The rest of the money would be used to restructure the City's debt and provide property tax relief.

Total of all levies would increase by \$462,009, or 1.8 percent. The 1.8 percent increase would be the maximum property tax increase the City could levy. However, expenditures and revenues could change before final budget adoption.

The Council will hold another work session on the budget Dec. 15 and will act on the budget and levy at its meeting Dec. 20.

Council gives nod for France Avenue redevelopment

The Council granted preliminary rezoning and development plan approval for a redevelopment on France Avenue.

The developer plans to raze the existing gas station at 6996 France Ave. and build an 8,260-square-foot office and retail building. The building would include a 3,000-square-foot retail store to be occupied by the Vitamin Shop and a 5,260-square-foot financial office.

The Council approved preliminary rezoning from "PCD-4, Planned Commercial District" to "Planned Unit Development" (PUD). Members also approved the preliminary development plan for the project.

Council approves plan to remove vegetation in ROW

The Council approved a revised staff recommendation to remove some vegetation from the public

right-of-way at the intersection of Valley View Road and Sally Lane. In October, the Council approved a staff recommendation to remove all of the vegetation from the right-of-way there. In November, Douglas and Jill Benner of 7025 Sally Lane requested that a hold be placed on removing the vegetation, based on the findings of their own transportation engineer, RLK. The Council agreed and directed staff to reevaluate their findings.

After reviewing the case again, staff recommended a compromise be reached. The Council approved RLK's recommendation for removal of some of the vegetation. After the plant materials have been removed, City staff will again analyze the sight lines. If more removal is required, the Benners will be instructed to do so.

Council considers larger signs

The Council granted first reading of an ordinance amendment allowing for greater real estate signs in the community.

The City recently received a complaint about the size of a real estate sign in the "R-1, Residential" zoning districts. Upon investigation of the complaint, it was discovered that most all of the existing "For Sale" signs in Edina don't conform to the City's maximum size requirement of six square feet. A traditional For Sale sign is six square feet in size. However, over time, it has become standard to add signs to the original sign, including open house information, website information and real estate agent names. The combination of all of these signs exceeds the maximum size requirement.

The Council settled on an amendment that will allow real estate signs up to 10 square feet in size in the R-1 and R-2 Residential zoning districts.

The Council will consider the matter again at its Dec. 20 meeting.